

130 YEARS OF MORAND



Morand
1889

THE DISTILLERIE LOUIS MORAND & CIE SA, MARTIGNY

CARINE CORNAZ BAYS



Cover page: stocks of bottles containing a Williams pear, ready for the *Williamine* to be bottled. The bottles are placed directly on the branches so that the pears will grow inside them.¹

Above: the heart of the Distillerie in 1940. These very stills, in this exact place, are still used to distil plants for absinthe, genepi, *Bon Valaisan*, and the *Liqueur du Cervin* and *Liqueur du Grand St-Bernard*, as well as fruit-peel-based beverages (lemon, orange and mandarin), coffee and cocoa.²

The Distillerie Louis Morand & Cie SA (1889-2019): 130 years of a local family business

Ever since its founding in Martigny in 1889, the Distillerie Louis Morand has been closely tied to its local area. Its devotion to the region, together with its expertise and its continuous thirst for quality, are just some of the ingredients that have allowed this family business to thrive across the generations and adapt to the changing times and changing attitudes to alcohol consumption.

The Distillerie has produced liqueurs, lemonades, syrups, pomace brandies, and eaux-de-vie, including the renowned *Williamine*, made from the Williams pear. As well as selling its own products, the family business has distributed other brands' drinks to hotels, cafés, restaurants and shops in Valais. As a result, beverages such as beers, aperitifs and Swiss mineral waters have featured in the company's catalogue over the years.

But the Distillerie Morand is more than just its products; it is the story of a family and the four generations who have worked to preserve and pass on their forebears' know-how. Driven by the characters who have headed up the company, it has spread its wings beyond its native Valais to the rest of Switzerland and abroad. The Distillerie Morand's product range still includes liqueurs made according to the recipes developed by its founder in the late 19th century. Its ability to innovate while respecting tradition is down to its sense of independence, loyalty, pragmatism and trust, and its drive to preserve and develop the family's legacy.



1950s and 1960s lemonade bottles.³



Label for Grenadine Syrup between 1950 and 1955.⁴

Louis Morand: developing the business, recipes and premises (1889-1921)

Distillation was already widespread in Valais when 22-year-old Louis Morand opened a distillery in Martigny-Combe in 1889. While initially established as a partnership with his brother Auguste, a year later he incorporated it as a company using his own name as the business name.

Surrounded by the vineyards of Martigny-Croix, Plan-Cerisier and Sommet-des-Vignes, it was only natural for Louis Morand to distil grape brandy and beverages, such as absinthe and genepi, made from local plants. Fine liqueurs, vermouth and various eaux-de-vie completed his product range.



Louis and Mathilde Morand.⁵

Louis devised his own recipes, including *Bon Valaisan* – also known as *Elixir du Cervin* (a juniper- and gential-based beverage) – as well as adapting the recipe for the *Liqueur du Grand St-Bernard* entrusted to him by the Canon of the Great St Bernard Hospice. To appeal to café owners at the other end of Valais, near the Simplon Pass, this drink also went by the name *Liqueur*



The original label and bottle for *Liqueur du Simplon*.⁶

du Simplon, although in reality it was the same recipe of Alpine plants and honey.

An 1894 article in the *L'Écho de Genève et du Léman* tells us a little more about Louis Morand's work ethic: "On a recent trip to Martigny, I took the opportunity to visit the distillery of Mr Louis Morand, the inventor and manufacturer of '*Liqueur du Simplon*'. I was keen to find out more about the production of this excellent liqueur, whose superiority and rare qualities I have often had the fortune to enjoy."



Louis Morand was a multi-award-winner. Above: awarding of the bronze medal at the Bordeaux World's Fair in 1895.⁷

The recipe soon had people talking about Louis Morand beyond the borders of the local canton, with the company picking up medals at the 1895 Bordeaux world's

fair, the 1900 Paris Exposition, the 1906 Milan International, and the 1914 Swiss national exhibition in Bern.



Label for *Elixir du Bon Valaisan*.⁸

In reality though, absinthe remained the best seller, partly because it was in fashion and partly because Louis Morand's recipe was so popular in Valais and Romandy.

The Swiss absinthe ban of 1910 was something the company brushed off relatively easily as its existing stock meant that it could continue to sell its absinthe alongside other products, from *genepi* to *Parfait Amour*.

In 1900, the Distillerie relocated to its current premises in Martigny. With his wife Mathilde ever by his side, Louis Morand created numerous recipes, prepared his fruits, distilled, bottled and labelled his lemonades and other specialities, visited clients, made deliveries, and was very active politically and elsewhere. Not only

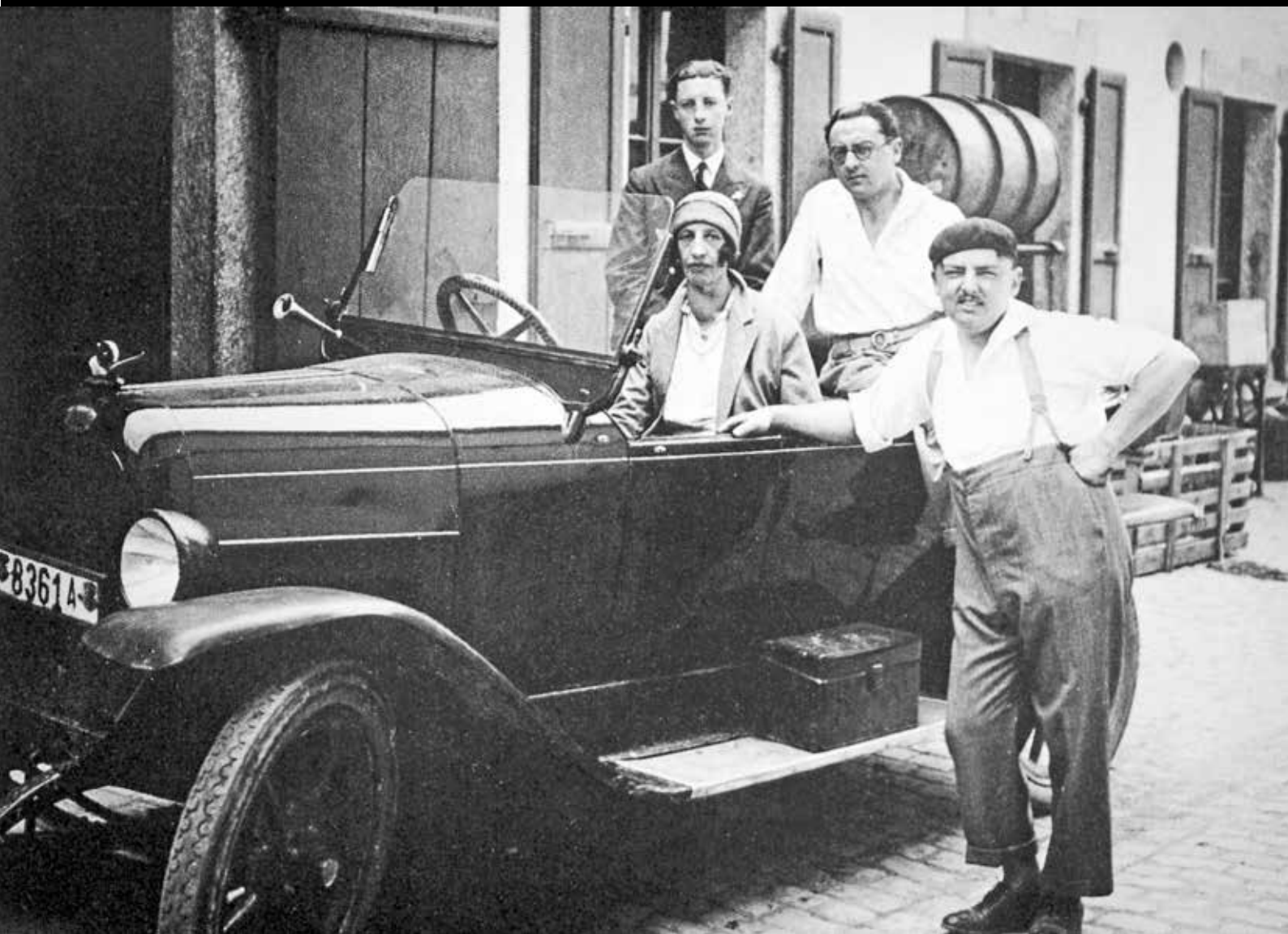


Contract distilling: still belonging to the Martigny-based Bompard family, 1912.⁹

did he found the Distillerie, he also developed it, created its recipes, established a distribution network, and cemented his products' prestige. The legacy of all of these things can still be felt today. His premature death in 1921 saw his 26-year-old son André taking over the business.



Distillerie Morand delivery truck involved in a road traffic accident in St-Maurice in the 1920s/1930s.¹⁰



Front, standing: André Morand. Seated in the car: Georges Morand, brother of André, "Aunt Adèle" - a relative - and an unknown person in the background.¹¹

André Morand: the rise of distribution and industrialisation (1921-1958)

The transition from small-scale production to an industrial business took place under the stewardship of André Morand. He expanded the range of liqueurs, syrups and lemonades and developed the distribution side of the business with the company's own products as well as those of other brands. Name any beverage – other than wine – and you can bet that it has featured in the Morand catalogue at some point.



Framboisie liqueur, *Mirabelle* liqueur, *Fine à l'Orange*, *Raspberry eau-de-vie* and *Griottine* liqueur in the 1950s.¹²

The Distillerie Morand became the distributor for numerous Swiss drinks brands, including the aperitif *Bitter des Diablerets*, the *Aigle-Lithinée* and *Henniez-Lithinée* mineral waters, the carbonated drink *Romanette*, and the Brasseries Beauregard and later the Cardinal beers. The range also included foreign products such as *Moët* champagne, the aperitif *Byrrh*, and even *Coca-Cola*, which André Morand first began distributing in the Bas-Valais region in 1950.



The Distillerie Morand sold a range of products, including *Henniez-Lithinée*, as shown in this advert which appeared in Swiss weekly *Le Confédéré* on 22 May 1931.¹³



Correspondence from 1961 between F. Leyvraz SA in Aigle and Morand concerning their collaboration; since 1948, Morand has been the distributor for *Bitter des Diablerets*.¹⁴



Morand has been the distributor for the Brasserie Beauregard since 1932. When the Brasserie was acquired by Cardinal in 1970, Morand managed to retain its exclusive licence.¹⁵



Coca-Cola was introduced to Switzerland in 1936; in 1950, the Distillerie Morand became the exclusive distributor for the Rhône valley, from St-Maurice to Riddes.¹⁶

From the 1920s onwards, counterfeit bottles of Marc de Dôle, Liqueur du Simplon, Liqueur du Grand St-Bernard and Elixir du Bon Valaisan began circulating on the market. As these were registered trademarks, the company encouraged consumers to only buy these liqueurs if they came in Morand-branded bottles.



In *Le Confédéré*, 31 July 1922, the Distillerie Morand warns its customers about counterfeits and its registered trademarks.¹⁷



Advert for *Liqueur du Grand St-Bernard*.¹⁸

André Morand also modified the company's premises to scale up production. He expanded both the buildings and the cellars and adapted the equipment and installations, ensuring that the company could grow and enter new markets in Valais and Switzerland. He added to the core range with flavoured lemonades such as *Oranjo* and *Abricolo*, and an aniseed aperitif called *Morandine*.



Upgrading the facilities allowed Morand to remain competitive. Above: distillation tanks used in the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s.^{19, 20, 21}

Like in the First World War, sugar was rationed in the 1940s. In response, the Distillerie had to reduce the amount of sugar in its drinks. It also struggled to get hold of enough glass. Ever since the 1932 federal law on alcohol had been brought in, professional distilleries had been required to hold a licence which, together with a new alcohol tax, resulted in the price of alcohol-based products doubling. However, the company's stocks meant that it was able to offer products at half price for a number of months.

Des Cadeaux

appréciés...

et de plus, **sans carte !**

Vous les trouverez à la

Distillerie MORAND

Martigny

*qui, reprenant une vieille coutume, met à la disposition de sa fidèle clientèle une gamme complète de liqueurs extra fines, **qualité d'avant-guerre.***

Est tout particulièrement recommandé

„un Triple-Sec“

dont les qualités supérieures sont rehaussées par un élégant habillage.

Prix très raisonnables. Consultez-nous. Tél. 6 10 36

Rationing cards weren't needed when stocking up on liqueurs ahead of Christmas, as this Second World War advert reminds customers (*Le Confédéré*, 21 December 1943).²²



Reproduction of the original label for the williamine produced by the Distillerie de Saconnex-d'Arve (GE).²³

It was at the end of the 1940s that André Morand began distilling Poire Williams eau-de-vie. Its subtle, fruity scent won over palates and markets. *Williamine* was born. André Morand purchased the rights to the name from the Distillerie de Saconnex-d'Arve (GE), which had previously sold its own product known as williamine. He registered the trademark in 1953, giving the company exclusive rights to the name, and ensured international protection for *Williamine* from 1956. It quickly became Europe's favourite Poire Williams eau-de-vie and was an instant hit both in Switzerland and abroad. *Wil-*



Promotional postcard from the 1960s.²⁴

liamine offered a new outlet for fruit growers in Valais. Orchards began growing more Williams pears and the variety soon became one of the most popular in Valais.

The Distillerie's employees felt a strong sense of loyalty towards André Morand. He always made sure to maintain strong links with local café and restaurant owners and was heavily involved in the local community, including as a member of Martigny Carnival's organising committee. It was because of this that the Distillerie would build a float for the parade each year. A founding member of FC Martigny and the Swiss Alpine Club's Monte-Rosa section, André Morand was also a very generous man. His pioneering attitude saw him set up a company pension fund long before the Swiss workplace pensions law was introduced. Supported by his wife, Anne-Marie, he was always prepared to help those who were down on their luck or suffering from illness at a time when the welfare state was still in its infancy. The death of his wife in 1958 affected him greatly. André's heart was no longer in the business and so he handed over the reins to his children Louis Morand, as the new CEO, and Colette Vocat, as co-owner and a partner in the business.



Louis Morand (front, left) and his sister Colette (white blouse) peel oranges and lemons with co-workers in the 1950s.²⁵



View of the Distillerie in winter in the 1950s.²⁶



A Distillerie truck broken down by the roadside in La Forclaz in the 1930s/1940s.²⁷

Williamine®: a global success story

Pear eau-de-vie has been distilled in the Valais region since the start of the 20th century. The Distillerie Morand is unusual in that it only uses the Williams variety and succeeds in producing the brandy on a large scale while still retaining an exceptional level of quality.

Since the 1940s, several producers had attempted to distil the Williams pear. These included Valais-based winemaker and merchant, Francis Germanier. The initial tests carried out by the Distillerie Morand proved promising, which encouraged André Morand to forge ahead with production. In doing so, the Distillerie purchased tonnes of Williams pears, giving Valais producers an outlet for these fragile fruits. Prior to this, the Williams pear had been used almost exclusively as a dessert fruit or for preserves. The effect on local fruit production was instantaneous: growers quickly began planting more Williams pear trees.



Bottling and labelling eaux-de-vie at the Distillerie Morand in the 1960s.²⁸



Early 1980s advert for Williamine showing La Bâtiaz Castle in Martigny, which featured on the label until 2012.²⁹

Williamine had found its place and would go on to account for half of the company's turnover. With the help of his brother Aloys, who would later become a cantonal judge, André Morand and his son Louis actively protected their trademark, whose name was so well known that it was often used to refer to the product in general.

Three factors led to the global success of Williamine: the quality of the product, the company's marketing expertise, and the trademark protection.



Trucks queue up outside the Distillerie Morand as they deliver pears, early 1960s.³⁰

Louis Morand: *Williamine* and the quality credo (1958-2004)

Louis Morand continued on the path set out by his father, developing the Distillerie's markets and network of foreign distributors – many of whom would go on to become family friends – which saw the business thrive. *Williamine* and the company's many other products were distributed on a much larger scale. And Louis Morand excelled at his work. Throughout his career, he placed great emphasis on the quality of both the fruit and the finished product. He kept meticulous notes about everything from the harvest to the number of kilos of fruit stored, the yields obtained and the taste of the final product.



Louis Morand in front of the old stills.³²



Pears being delivered and sorted around 1960, with André Morand and Olivier Vocat in front of the conveyor belt.³¹

He was also very active in the local cultural and sporting community. He developed partnerships with major businesses, including Chocolat Suchard. His industry involvement on both a local and national level underpinned his constant quest to develop products and



Chocolates filled with *Williamine* go on sale in 1957. The collaboration with Suchard would last until the 1990s.³³

maintain their quality. At the end of the 1960s, alongside Germanier – the Vétroz-based producer of the liqueur Bon Père William – he introduced a common quality standard for pear eau-de-vie. Its requirements were: for the fruit to meet certain standards in terms

of its character, quality and provenance; for it to be distilled on Valaisan soil; and for the product to be submitted to the cantonal laboratory for a chemical and taste analysis. This standard provided the blueprint for the future AOP (protected designation of origin) certification. As a result of its expertise, the company played an important role in drawing up the supporting documents for the AOP applications for *Valais pear eau-de-vie* (2001) and *Abricotine* (2003).

Louis Morand was always keen to encourage fair working conditions and attended local employers' meetings from the mid-1960s onwards. These meetings between the managers of various companies based in Martigny (Louis Morand & Cie, Caves Orsat SA, Marti Matériaux SA, Veuthey & Cie SA, and Migros Valais) provided a forum for issues such as working conditions, social security, recruitment and employee training.



Family ties are common at the Distillerie. Above: the Monnets – father and son – bottle the latest Morand lemonades in November 1987.³⁴

Morand's strong market presence initially held up fairly well in the face of the tough economic climate of the 1990s, but sales gradually decreased and stock began to pile up. Eaux-de-vie and liqueurs were no longer considered essentials and so, when recession hit, they were the first to suffer. With consumers increasingly turning to large supermarkets, the distribution business was also hit.



Louis Morand in front of the Distillerie to mark the company's 100th anniversary in 1989.³⁵



The Distillerie Morand stills in 1989.³⁶



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In 2015, Morand bought out Rostal Herbes Aromatiques Grand-St-Bernard SA.



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The Herbes Aromatiques Grand-St-Bernard products are made from plants grown by local Valais producers. Above: genepi ⁴⁶, lemon balm ⁴⁸, common thyme ⁴⁹ and camomile ⁵⁰. Since 2015, the herbs have been packed in an on-site workshop by people with mental disabilities.



The Morand product range expansion has been driven by members of the fourth generation.⁵¹⁻⁵⁸



Numerous collaborations have been launched to develop new products.⁵⁹⁻⁶⁶

The fourth generation and rewriting the company's strategy (2004-)

It was in the midst of this challenging context – poor economic conditions, a drop in alcohol consumption, and the introduction of new tax rules that placed native and foreign products on an equal footing – that the fourth generation took the helm in the 2000s. Few distilleries survived the international competition. In 2004, as the new drink-drive limit of 0.5 milligrams per millilitre was introduced, after-dinner liqueurs began to go out of vogue and eaux-de-vie found themselves ailing. The company needed to restructure and win over new markets. An external CEO was appointed in 2008, but the Morand family retained a strong presence both in operations and on the board of directors.

The company's long-standing retail arm was let go in 2015 in order to focus on Morand's own-brand products – syrups, cocktails, eaux-de-vie and liqueurs whose alcohol content was reduced to 30%, and even eau-de-vie-based sauces – and their development. The



Morand engages 8 chefs to create a celebratory culinary experience in the heart of the Distillerie for the company's 130th anniversary.

Left to right: Mathieu Bruno, Mathieu Biolaz, Julien Gaussares (Christophe Rod's colleague), Franck Reynaud, Christophe Rod, Damien Germanier, Jacques Bovier and Stéphane Décotterd.⁶⁷

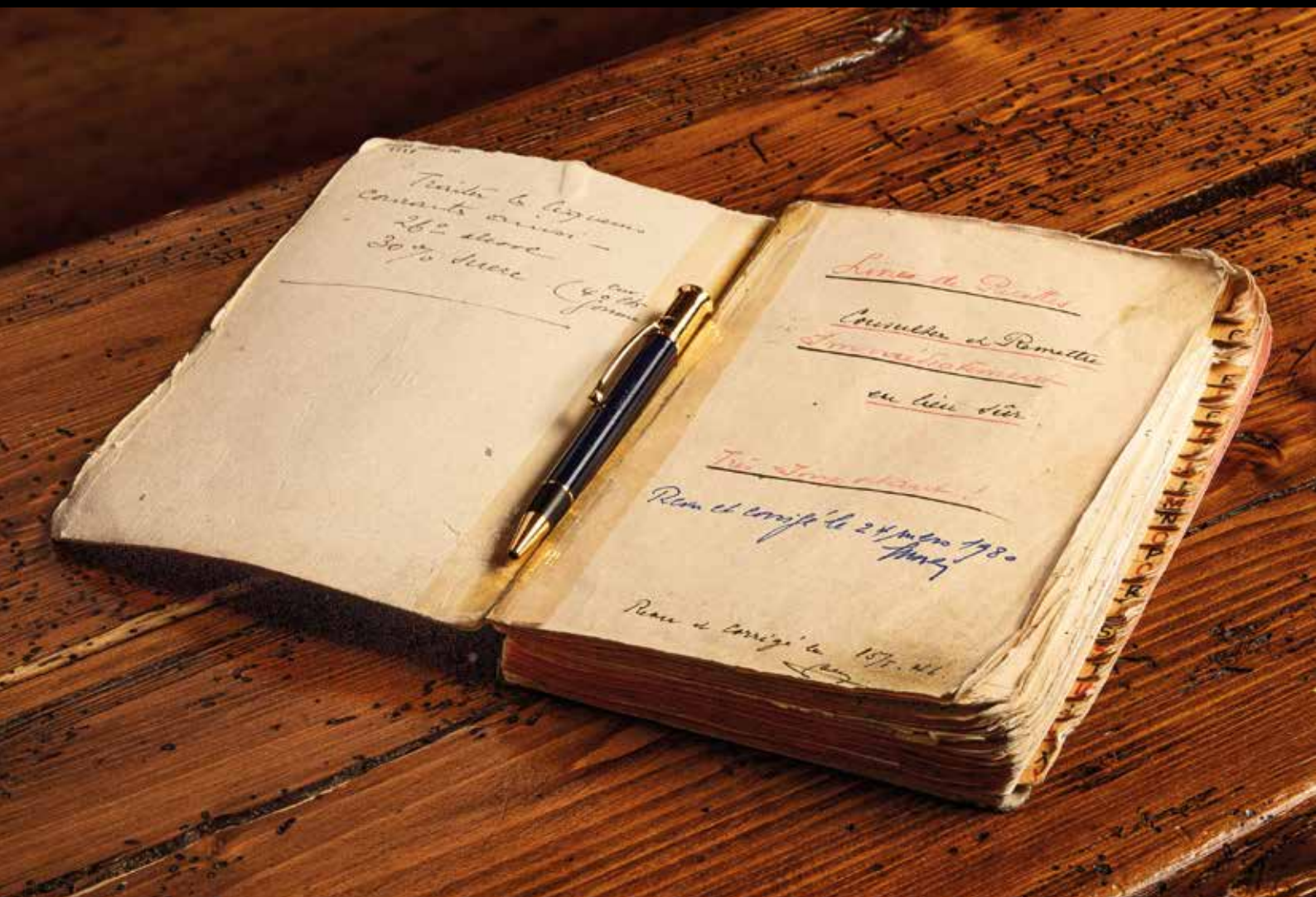


Marian Beke, renowned London barman and ambassador for the mixology line.⁶⁸

same year, the company entered an exciting new phase when it acquired Rostal Herbes Aromatiques Grand-St-Bernard SA, bringing it closer to one of its own iconic beverages: the *Liqueur du Grand St-Bernard*.

Developing new products remains very important and has taken place not only within the company but also in partnership with regional movers and shakers, resulting in innovations such as the *Williamine* ice creams and the Valaisan pear gin. Beyond its products, the company is keen to pass on its passion and expertise through workshops, tours, events and team-building sessions based around spirits and syrups. Working in conjunction with restaurants has led to the creation of original recipes based on the Distillerie's products.

Morand is continuing to develop while retaining its original values and the elements that have contributed to its success for over a century: quality products, strong local roots, partnerships, and supporting the local community.



The recipes are passed down through the generations and kept secret in the Distillerie's Book of Recipes, which "must be consulted and stored in a safe place", as the founder indicates on the Book's first page.⁶⁹

Morand: a common thread running through its history

Morand's longevity is down to several things. Each CEO has, in their own way, continued the work of the previous generation by respecting its know-how and recipes while facing up to the challenges of their own era. The involvement of the Morand family in the economy, politics, culture and society of Martigny and the region as councillors, members of umbrella federations, sponsors and patrons has been significant. At one time or another the football club, hockey club, carnival, Fondation Ginanadda, and even the Verbier festival have received the support of the Morand family.

Strong social engagement is also central to the company. Long-term Distillerie employees are recognised for their loyalty, with gestures such as a gold watch being awarded to a Mr Kittel in 1943 in recognition of his 20 years' service at the company. The business also supports its workers' families, as was the case with Léonce Guex, an employee who died suddenly at work in 1949. It is not only individuals who benefit; communities have also received financial support from the company, with notable examples including Lourtier following the fire of 1929 and the landslide of 1937. When the Polish miners working at the Mont Chemin iron mine were unable to get home to their families for Christmas in 1941, Morand made sure they received gifts. In 2004 the company established work experience placements for youngsters, and in 2015 began employing people with disabilities to package its Grand-St-Bernard herbs and spices in an on-site workshop launched with the support of the FOVAHM (Fondation valaisanne en faveur des personnes handicapées mentales/Valais foundation for people with mental disabilities). Throughout its history, Morand has played an important social role.

Locals are deeply attached to a business that has been a part of their region for over a century and that has greatly contributed to the canton's economy. Its reputation throughout Switzerland and abroad is no doubt due to the quality of its products. Ever since the beginning, the Distillerie has picked up award after award. While it has optimised the work of its distillers by computerising production, some steps such as labelling are still performed manually. The recipes and family know-how have been scrupulously and secretly passed down through the generations.

It is these forces – so commonly found in Swiss family businesses – that have led to the Distillerie Louis Morand & Cie's lengthy success.



The heart of the Distillerie Morand: co-workers enjoy an aperitif, Christmas 2019.⁷⁰

The MORAND family

The business has been in the hands of the Morand family for the last 130 years. Throughout this time, it has been passed down from father to son.

It was founded by Louis Morand (1867-1921), with the support of his wife Mathilde Chappelet (1860-1918). Following the death of this radical trailblazer in 1921, the Distillerie was taken over by one of his sons, André Morand (1895-1984). His wife, Anne-Marie Moret (1903-1958), an extremely popular figure, was heavily

involved both in running the business and in supporting disadvantaged members of society. The third generation was represented by two of their children: Louis Morand (1928-) as CEO, supported by his wife Mireille Meunier (1935-), and Colette Morand (1932-), married to André Vocat (1924-1991), a partner and member of the board of directors.

The five children of the fourth generation – Olivier Vocat, Bruno Vocat, André Morand, Jean-Pierre Morand



Louis and Mathilde Morand (1st generation).⁷¹



André and Anne-Marie Morand (2nd generation).⁷²



Louis and Mireille Morand (3rd generation).⁷³



Colette and André Vocat (3rd generation).⁷⁴



Top: Colette Vocat, Louis Morand, Mireille Morand (3rd generation).⁷⁵⁻⁷⁷

Bottom: Olivier Vocat, Bruno Vocat, André Morand, Jean-Pierre Morand, Julien Morand (4th generation).⁷⁸⁻⁸²

and Julien Morand – are also involved in the family business. Julien Morand and Bruno Vocat work in operations, while Olivier Vocat, Jean-Pierre Morand and André Morand sit on the board of directors as chairman, managing director and member respectively. The fourth generation looks after the company's interests and drives innovation, having launched many of the company's newest products (most notably, *Douce de*, *COEUR*, *sWiss Cocktails*, *sWiss Rock*, and *Mousse de*).

The Morand family prides itself on having not only the best liqueur makers, distillers, CEOs and supportive spouses, but also on counting business and legal experts among its ranks. They have been particularly in-

volved in protecting the company's trademarks (such as *Williamine*), its know-how and its products (such as for *Abricotine AOP*). The members of the Morand family who have led the business are legendary figures. By passing on their knowledge, relatability and professionalism, they have imbued the Distillerie with the values that have marked and that continue to mark its culture and identity.



Mireille Morand's jams became almost as famous as the spirits in the shop.⁸³

Key dates

- 1889 Louis Morand founds the Distillerie Morand with his brother.
 - 1900 The company moves to its current site.
 - 1921 Louis Morand dies and the company is taken over by his son, André.
 - 1940s The facilities are modernised and professionalised.
 - 1953 The *Williamine* trademark is registered in Switzerland.
 - 1958 The company is taken over by Louis Morand and turned into a partnership with his sister Colette Vocat.
 - 1970s The company expands internationally.
 - 1980s The company's golden age.
 - 1990 Fire rips through the Distillerie and two warehouses go up in smoke.
 - 1992 Louis Morand & Cie becomes a limited liability company.
 - 2004 Louis Morand steps down as director and passes the baton to the fourth generation. Bruno Vocat and Julien Morand play an active role in the company, while Olivier Vocat and Jean-Pierre Morand head up the board.
 - 2008 A CEO is appointed from outside the family.
 - 2015 The company acquires Rostal Herbes Aromatiques Grand-St-Bernard SA.
- It ceases its distribution operations.
- Fabrice Haenni (2nd generation of Rostal) takes over as CEO. The family continues to play an active role at board and management level.



Article reporting the Distillerie fire in 1990 (Le Nouvelliste, 17 September 1990).⁸⁴



Fabrice Haenni, director of the Distillerie Morand since 2015.⁸⁵



The Distillerie Morand in 2014 with the family home in the foreground.⁸⁶

Author: Carine Cornaz Bays with the collaboration of Julien Morand, Fabrice Haenni and Jean-Pierre Morand.
Translation: AST Language Services.

Graphics: Graphem, Guillaume Faisant.

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e-newspaperarchives.ch: 13, 17, 22.

Fabrice Haenni: 67, 70.

Robert Hofer: 1, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86.

Magali Koenig: 36.

Thomas Masotti: 3, 4, 6, 7, 63, 65, 69.

Fred Merz: 68.

Julien Morand: 15, 73.

Georges Pillet Collection, Valais Media Library - Martigny: 10.

Mediplant: 46.

Photoval: 45, 47, 62.

Rostal: 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44.

Valplantes: 48, 49, 50.

Villars Graphic: 40, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66.



The Distillerie Louis Morand and the family home on its current site in around 1900. Louis Morand is on the left, accompanied by his wife Mathilde and their children André, Germaine and Georges.⁸⁷

The Distillerie Morand would like to thank the Valais State Archives and the Valais Media Library for their research support. © 2020, Distillerie Louis Morand & Cie SA, Martigny.



MORAND

— 1889 —

DISTILLATEUR À MARTIGNY

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